

NOVEMBER 15, 1955



1026 17th STREET, N. W., WASHINGTON 6, D. C.

There Is Properly No History; Only Biography

*Plus ça change, plus c'est
la même chose.*

IT COULD be 1890 in South Dakota. A 31-year-old woman, Carrie Chapman Catt, was conducting her first woman suffrage campaign. Young and strong, she was given the hardest part of the state to cover, the central plain, desolated by a five-year drought. At her first stop she was greeted by the postmaster, owner of one of the two homes there. In favor of woman suffrage, he had arranged for her to speak in the granary and had urged all who came after their mail to attend. At her next stop she was not greeted at all, until hours later. Her hostess gave her bread and watermelon for supper, the melons being the only crop not burned up by the drought. The 30 or 40 families there, including wives and babies, came to the grain elevator to hear her speak.

Or it could be 1893 in Colorado, when Mrs. Catt rode a pushcart to meet a speaking engagement. The pushcart ran by gravity, and the road was downhill all the way. Faster and faster it went, and her bag of sandwiches went flying off into space as she clung to her hat with one hand and to the car with the other. Arriving late, she rushed to the courthouse and made her speech, then slept a few hours, and flagged a train for the next stop.

Even Earlier

Or it could be 1848 in Seneca Falls, New York, when Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton led the first woman's rights convention, which dared to propose that "It is the duty of the women of this country to secure to themselves their sacred right to the elective franchise." Women had no rights under the law, their

husbands even had the right to beat them provided the stick was no bigger around than the judge's thumb. *Votes* for women? How ridiculous can you get!

Or it could be 1850 in Massachusetts, when a suffrage convention brought Lucy Stone into the movement. Or 1852 in New York, when Susan B. Anthony joined forces with that convention. Or 1875, when Susan B. Anthony drew up the wording of a proposal for a constitutional amendment. It read: "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex." It was the exact wording of the 19th Amendment as adopted, though that took another 45 years.

Plus Ça Change

Or it could be 1920. Suffrage for women had just been won in what has been termed the most brilliant constitutional campaign ever conducted in this country. It had been won despite powerful forces which had spent millions of dollars to defeat it. Nothing as efficient as the suffrage association had ever before been built up out of volunteer forces. With victory, enthusiasm was at its highest. Mrs. Catt had led the fight for woman suffrage. When she sent out the convention call to the National American Woman Suffrage Association in 1919 (the fiftieth anniversary of its founding and the year in which the 19th Amendment was passed by Congress a few months later) she wrote: "As a fitting memorial to a half century of progress, the association invites the women voters of the 15 full-suffrage states to attend this anniversary and there to join their forces in a League of Women Voters. . . ." Thus, in

1920, the League arose, phoenix fashion, from the suffrage association.

Or it could be 1955, in every state in the union, where 127,000 members are joined through 985 local Leagues to make up the League of Women Voters of the United States. And in 1955 it could be any or all of the 17 members of the national Board who, combined, have visited over 200 communities since January 1. As they make trips to nearly every state they go in the same spirit, if not under the same conditions, as the pioneers from Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Carrie Chapman Catt.

La Même Chose

They may not ride pushcarts to keep appointments, but one rode with 500 live chickens in the back of a windowless truck so that she could make a plane connection. Probably none has had to address 30 or 40 families with *all* the babies present, but one Board member wrote glowingly of the extreme youthfulness of her audience, the youngest being five months old. Another was snowbound for three days in South Dakota, where Carrie Chapman Catt sat for nearly a day on a sun-baked prairie in mid-August waiting to be met.

As the French say, the more it changes, the more it is the same thing!

The suffrage pioneers fought long and hard against prodigious efforts to defeat their cause. Opposing forces attacked the principle and tried to discredit the leaders.

But the cause was just, the women were stout-hearted, and they won. Their leaders were vindicated, even glorified. It was one of the great victories in the achievement of political freedom in this country.

The names and the deeds of the early pioneers are immortalized in history books, in marble statues, on memorial postage stamps. Their present-day counterparts carry on in what is but a continuation and an extension of the same spirit. Some of them are lineal as well as "spiritual" descendants. The League's present national President is the daughter of an early suffragist in Connecticut. The mother of another national Board member was an active suffrage worker and her father, then on a state Supreme Court bench, marched in suffrage parades despite criticism by his colleagues. A former national President is the great granddaughter of Lucretia Mott.

The woman suffrage pioneers said and did things that make them sound like League members today; and vice versa. It was characteristic of Elizabeth Cady Stanton that at her last appearance at a convention she should propose that the approaching (1893) Chicago World's Fair should remain open on Sundays. After the delegates were well into spirited debate she withdrew her motion on the ground that she had introduced it solely for the purpose of discussion. Doesn't that sound like a unit meeting, or a national Convention, today?

It was also Mrs. Stanton who, presiding at the NAWSA convention in 1890, said: "The moment we begin to fear the opinions of others, and from motives of policy are silent when we should speak, the divine floods of light and life flow no longer into our souls."

Now—And Then

At the 1954 League Convention the national President said: "There is some quality of spirit deep in human beings which is inextinguishable yet infrequently finds expression. It is the stuff of which greatness is made. . . . I have come to look upon the League not as just a worthwhile but somewhat incidental occupation, but rather as a vivid and vital expression of that imperishable idea that is deeply rooted in the American conscience. . . . It is the idea of the dignity and worth and capacity of the individual human being. This idea does not need crisis treatment as much as it needs steady, commonplace, everyday application. It takes a quality of greatness to be moderate and restrained and unwavering in devotion. I believe you can do much to keep the breath of creative life in this idea, in this faith. I believe it is your destiny to do so."

Back in 1920 Carrie Chapman Catt also exhorted women as to their

destiny. She said: "The vote is won. Seventy-two years the battle for this privilege has been waged, but human affairs with their eternal change move on without pause. Progress is calling to you to make no pause. Act!"

A Record of Action

Members of the League of Women Voters made no pause. They acted. They have been doing so for 35 years, and the historical record is now a long one. Details of the work history of the League have just been chronicled in the Program Record and the publication is ready to be launched. It is a proud record, and while it is couched in terms of League accomplishment it is in a very real sense the story of the effectiveness of women in general in U. S. political life. It is appropriate, therefore, that it should make its appearance on the eve of the year in which women will for the tenth time cast their votes in a presidential election.

The Program Record is indeed a work history; the many great personalities who helped make that history are not mentioned. But since "history is the essence of innumerable biographies" it seems fitting to preface the launching with some sidelights on at least the present national leaders of the League.

Meet the National Board

A few common denominators will serve to introduce them as a group. First, they work for the League, some of them practically full time, with no remuneration. And it isn't because they have nothing else to do.

All are married, have homes to take care of, most do part or all of their housework and cooking. To a man, their husbands heartily approve of their devoting time to the League.

Eleven have children of their own; two others have stepchildren; the over-all average is about two. Six have grandchildren.

All have, or have had, other civic interests in addition to the League. These range from local and county welfare and civic organizations to Mayor's committees, Governor's committees, national committees, and one national Board member served by presidential appointment.

The average length of their membership in the League is about 18 years. Nearly all are still active in their local Leagues. Most have served as presidents of local Leagues, presidents of state Leagues, or at least as members of local and state Boards.



Mrs. John G. Lee, President

—Joined in 1934 in Connecticut . . . was president of her local League, Farmington . . . president state League 1941-49 . . . national Board since 1944, national President since 1950 . . . served on Foreign Operations Administration Public Advisory Board, nominated by President Eisenhower and confirmed by U. S. Senate . . . with her husband organized Junior School of West Hartford, which grew from student body of Lee children and those of a few other couples to 200 pupils from kindergarten to sixth grade . . . served as member State Library Committee, adjunct of State Board of Education . . . was member Board of Union Settlement, Hartford, and served on Governor's War Council . . . now trustee Connecticut College, trustee Putney (Vt.) School . . . husband is director of research of an aircraft corporation . . . four children, four grandchildren.

Mrs. Robert F. Leonard, First Vice President



—Joined in 1934 in Washington, D. C., served on board, as president 1945-47 . . . has held present national office since 1950 . . . in D. C. is board member Family and Child Services . . . was member civilian committee which interviewed and screened applicants for WAC from D. C. . . former board member Washington Foster Day Care and Counseling Association, executive committee Health Section of United Community Services . . . husband is director Division of Bank Operations of Board of Governors of Federal Reserve System.



Mrs. Rensis Likert, Second Vice President

—Joined in 1936 in Connecticut, continued in Leagues in D. C. and nearby Maryland . . . was member of board of Ann Arbor League in Michigan, her native state, and president state League 1949-51 . . . national Board since 1951 . . . has served on various commissions including Michigan "Little Hoover Commission" . . . long active in YWCA and parent-education groups . . . has done research in child study and education . . . husband is director Institute for Social Research at University of Michigan . . . two daughters.

Mrs. Werner J. Blanchard, Secretary



—Joined in 1934 . . . president Dayton League 1944-46, president Ohio League 1949-53 . . . national Board since April 1954 . . . member National Committee on Social Action of Presbyterian Church and board member Dayton Council on World Affairs . . . in Dayton has been YWCA president, board member of Council of Social Agencies, Community Chest . . . was second vice president Ohio Citizens Council on Health and Welfare and member Ohio Com-

mittee for Adoption of Hoover Report . . . widow since 1948, husband was engineer who founded and was general manager of division of large motor company . . . two children, two grandchildren.

Mrs. Edward M. Boyne,
Treasurer—Joined in 1941 in New York City when, shopping for book, clerk asked her to sign petition for county reorganization



. . . asked who was sponsoring it, clerk said the League of Women Voters, and Mrs. Boyne said "Oh, it must be all right then" . . . became member state board and, for three years, state president . . . on national Board since 1951 . . . now lives in Pittsburgh, is member Mayor's Committee on Administration for Department of Public Health and member Housing Coordinating Committee of Pittsburgh . . . in New York was member local Board of Education . . . husband is corporation lawyer.

Mrs. Drysdale Brannon,
Director—Joined in 1941 because "the League was the first organization I had found where the program and decisions came from

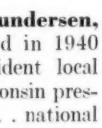
the grass roots—truly democratic procedure" . . . helped found Marion (Ind.) League and was first president . . . state president 1950-52, national Board since 1952 . . . member boards Grant County Welfare Department and Marion Family Service Society . . . past board member Grant County Tuberculosis Association and Red Cross . . . husband is managing editor Marion Chronicle . . . two sons.

Mrs. Harold D. Dyke,
Director—Joined in 1922 . . . was Syracuse (N. Y.) League president . . . later served on state board . . . national Board 1943-48 and again since June 1954 . . . in 1947 was appointed by Mayor of Syracuse to Citizens' Tax Study Committee and in 1950 was named by County Board of Supervisors to serve on supervisors citizens committee to study reform of county government . . . late husband was insurance company manager . . . two sons, two grandchildren.



Mrs. Alf H. Gundersen,
Director—Joined in 1940 . . . was president local League . . . Wisconsin president 1952-54 . . . national Board since June 1954 . . .

LaCrosse Chamber of Commerce named her *Man of the Year* because of her speaking campaign in 1948-49 to further community understanding of U.N. . . . civic activities have included membership on Governor's Commission on Highway Safety, Governor's Citizens' Advisory Committee on Public School Education, Governor's and Mayor's U.N. Day Committees, Girl Scout Council, Community Chest, YWCA . . . husband is prominent surgeon . . . three children, three grandchildren.



Mrs. Orville Foreman,
Director—Joined in 1927 in her still hometown of Jacksonville (Ill.) "because my mother, three aunts, and all their friends took it for granted I would; I always had an interest in politics but was too independent for party work" . . . legislative chairman state League 1947-51, also state vice president . . . national Board since 1951 . . . appointed by Governor to Illinois Human Relations Commission . . . husband is a lawyer . . . three children.



Mrs. C. Walker Hayes,
Director—Joined in 1948 in Albuquerque (N. M.) when that League was a provisional . . . interest started during 18-year residence in nation's capital, of which 14 were in federal government . . . became president her local League, then on state board and, in 1952, national Board . . . was teacher, first in one-room rural schoolhouse where taught first through seventh grades and acted as janitor too, and last as instructor in college economics . . . husband, now retired, was sociology professor . . . four stepsons.

Mrs. Henry L. Killen,
Director—Joined in 1936 when, impressed with work Georgia League was doing to improve prison-parole system, she helped found and was first president Albany League . . . moved to Florida, where was vice president Orlando League and then president state League 1949-51 . . . on national Board since 1952 . . . helped organize Citizens' Constitution Committee of Florida and became vice chairman . . . native of Louisiana, taught school there and in two adopted states . . . husband is associated with large life insurance company . . . two stepsons.



Mrs. John F. Latimer,
Director—Joined in 1947 in Washington, D. C., after return from overseas duty . . . served D. C. League in various capacities and was president 1953-55 . . . on national Board since May 1955 . . . member D. C. Juvenile Court Advisory Committee, Washington Home Rule Committee, Washington Housing Association and other civic groups . . . librarian in Baltimore nine years and 1944-46 was American Red Cross overseas hospital staff aide, serving New Guinea and Philippines . . . husband is professor of classical languages and literature and an assistant dean, George Washington University.

Mrs. Walter H. C. Laves,
Director—Joined in 1936 in Hyde Park (Ill.), where became president . . . continued membership in D.C. and nearby Maryland . . . main interest has been international relations . . . was on national Board about

a year 1953-54, reappointed October 1955 to fill vacancy . . . widely traveled, lived in France 1947-50, when husband was deputy director general of UNESCO . . . husband is now chairman Department of Government at Indiana University . . . two daughters.



Mrs. Moses H. Lurie,
Director—Joined in 1938 in Cambridge (Mass.) because of desire to "know her town" in League sense of the word . . . president

Belmont League 1939-41, state board 1941-45, state president 1945-48 . . . on national Board since 1949 . . . trustee Cambridge School in Weston and director Massachusetts Community Organization Service . . . husband is surgeon and otolaryngologist, and professor of otology Harvard Medical School . . . three children, one grandchild.



Mrs. J. D. Perryman,
Director—Joined in 1947 . . . served local League, Dallas, in various capacities, went on Texas state board 1951, first vice president state League 1952-54 . . . national Board since April 1954 . . . chairman County Citizens Committee Jury Service for Women 1954 and in 1955 served as first woman grand juror in Dallas County . . . on boards Dallas Council on World Affairs, Dallas Mental Health Society, Red Cross . . . husband is geologist with geotechnical corporation . . . one son.



Mrs. Oscar M. Ruehausen,
Director—Joined in 1938 in New York City when, she says, "I was offered a paid job at \$22.50 a week; since the organization seemed poorer than I did, I paid dues and became a member" . . . on national staff of League 1943-46, in field of economics and foreign policy . . . vice president New York City League 1946-52, on national Board since 1952 . . . since 1946, observer at U.N. for League, one of 150 non-governmental organizations so accredited . . . widely traveled, she and her husband, a lawyer, attended the recent Atoms-for-Peace Conference in Geneva.



Mrs. Waldo E. Stephens,
Director—Joined in 1934 in New York City . . . continued activity in Oklahoma, where has been on Oklahoma City board and on state board . . . main League interest is international relations and she became member of national Board in 1949 following successful year as U.N. chairman for Oklahoma League . . . husband is executive vice president of an oil company, and both he and Mrs. Stephens are known throughout state as leaders in public affairs . . . two children, two grandchildren.

PRESIDENT'S DESK

THERE is a direct relationship between our belief in what our nation stands for and our willingness to stand up for those ideas. Faith in ideals has been an American characteristic from the days of the founding fathers until today. It has furnished us the strength which has made our nation great. It has given us the power to make the ideal the real.

As the country embarks in a troubled era upon a hot political campaign we will be put to a strenuous test. Is our capacity to discern the truth and maintain our faith in principles sufficient to withstand the pressures to which we will be subject?

Some of these rising pressures can be detected now and they are the kind which can be most disconcerting to the average citizen and to the organization which operates from the premise of good faith. If our belief in our American heritage is truly deep, we will refuse to be intimidated and will not allow our ideals to be compromised.

There are two areas in which the League of Women Voters has already begun to feel the impact of these developing pressures.

There are extremist groups in the country today which seem to be embarking on a campaign to discredit the ideas and work of reputable individuals and organizations. These groups use the techniques of half truths, untruths, and innuendoes in an attempt to make their political

opinions prevail. They apparently will not tolerate honest differences of opinion expressed by free debate of real facts. They develop confusion and fear and use them as their major weapons.

These groups have attacked before. They strike out at many organizations whose reputations are above reproach but whose attitudes upon public issues do not agree with their own. In the past they have charged as having questionable motives groups such as the Girl Scouts, the American Association of University Women, the National Council of Churches, to name but three. Now they are distributing throughout the country various publications and reprints which aim to throw suspicion upon the motives and work of the League of Women Voters.

There is no easy formula which can be applied to dispel the doubts which these materials raise in the minds of those who receive them. There is only one answer and it is not a simple one. It is to continue to carry out the purpose of the League of Women Voters with renewed determination and dedication. It is to develop even better understanding and support of League work. It is to make the performance of the League so clearly based on democratic principles and procedures that its record cannot be challenged.

Every member has a responsibility to maintain these standards for the League. Indeed, every member, as a citizen, has this responsibility to her country. Let there be no doubt that failure to support actively what we believe in will spell a certain sort of

WE HAVE NEWS FOR YOU

The Program Record is ready. It's a brand new, two-in-one publication—a history of League work on local, state, and national levels, but so organized and indexed that it is a ready reference and resource in planning Current Agendas. An invaluable aid in the program-making period in which Leagues are now engaged, it is 52 pages for 50¢. It made the deadline by the usual good League planning: the former editor of *THE NATIONAL VOTER* who was assisting a national Board member in the writing finished the index October 18 and had her third baby October 19.

* * *

Mrs. Walter H. C. Laves, member of the national Board 1953-54, has been re-appointed to fill the post vacated by Mrs. Malcolm Hargraves, who resigned because of her husband's illness.

* * *

Never before in the history of U.N. Day has there been such activity as there was this year. To take the figures of one

death to the best that is our American tradition.

The second matter is that Leagues will shortly be faced anew with the need to interpret and protect the League's nonpartisan policy. Strict adherence to the policy will help us immeasurably in weathering the storm of other pressures. Every League Board is urged to treat this matter with the utmost seriousness and to make its decisions not from the base of expediency, but rather from the long-range view of what will best protect the nonpartisan character of the League.

It is difficult for an individual to get the feel of the League of Women Voters as a whole. Each member is inevitably limited by her own environment and experience. From the vantage point of the national office one does have an over-all view. I have a profound belief that the part the League can play at this crucial point in American history is of incalculable importance. It can, if its members choose, provide the nation in this troubled period with a sort of balance, a demonstration of sound principles in action and a sense that safety exists in adherence to our time tested and historic values. It is to be earnestly hoped that the members see the mission of the League in this light and that each and every one of us will be eager to pull her full weight to this end.

Remy Marvin Lee

Publisher's Statement

STATEMENT REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF AUGUST 24, 1912, AS AMENDED BY THE ACTS OF MARCH 3, 1933 AND JULY 2, 1946 (Title 39 United States Code, Section 233, showing the ownership, management, and circulation of *THE NATIONAL VOTER*, published monthly, with additional issues in February, March, April and June, at Washington, D. C., for November 15, 1955.

1. The names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor and business manager: Publisher, League of Women Voters of the U. S., 1026 17th Street, N. W., Washington 6, D. C.; Editor and Managing Editor, Dorothy Felker Girton, 1028 17th Street, N. W., Washington 6, D. C.; Business Manager, none.

2. The owner is: League of Women Voters of the U. S., 1026 17th Street, N. W., Washington 6, D. C.; Mrs. John G. Lee, President; Mrs. Walter J. Blanchard, Secretary; Mrs. Edward M. Boyce, Treasurer.

3. The known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding one per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: None.

DOROTHY FELKER GIRTON, Editor

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 4th day of October, 1955.

[SEAL] NINA G. BOYKIN
(My Commission Expires October 14, 1958.)

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